



Halifax Regional Library Board

Meeting Minutes

Videoconference – via Zoom

Tuesday, June 30, 2020 – 4:30-6:00pm

Attendees

All board members in attendance with regrets from Alfred Burgesson, Sharon Costey and Linda MacKay

1.0 Call to Order/Approval of Agenda

Board Chair Cindy O’Driscoll called the meeting to order.

The Chair welcomed the new most recently appointed Board members; Heather Rose and Emily Miller.

Marika Warren put forth a motion to approve the agenda as circulated. This motion was seconded by Kim Brooks.

Motion approved.

2.0 Minutes of May 28, 2020

Marika Warren put forth a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 28, 2020 as circulated. This motion was seconded by Lisa Blackburn.

Motion approved.

3.0 Chair’s Report

Cindy O’Driscoll provided a brief report to the Board. An orientation session will be held with the three most recent board appointees: Emily Miller, Heather Rose, and Linda MacKay. Anyone else interested in attending should contact the CEO’s office.

The Board is exploring having the Annual Meeting in September. In addition, the Board will be looking to schedule a Retreat in the coming months as well. The Board has previously indicated that Risk will be a topic of discussion at the Retreat.

Cindy O’Driscoll added that the Executive Committee of the Board has not met, but some material has been circulated regarding CEO Evaluation.

3.1 Statement on Racial and Social Equity

In consideration of recent events in Canada and US, and social challenges regarding areas of social and racial inequity, such as the Black Lives Matters movement, the Board discussed how best the Library should move forward, in an intentional way, to help end systemic racism.

Lisa Blackburn put forth the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board endorse the CULC Statement on Race and Social Equity and commits to engaging in ongoing Board and staff education and development to revise practices, procedures and services with the aim to eliminate systemic racism and promote equity and inclusion.

This motion was seconded by Marika Warren.

Motion approved.

This statement will be supported by Halifax Public Libraries, and will be on the website.

Chief Librarian & CEO Åsa Kachan spoke further on the issue, adding that there is much the Library can do, including having discussions on how we can improve. It is important that the organization's policies and procedures be written with an inclusive lens.

The role of the Library in race and social equity should be tied in both what is provided to the community, but also as a public employer, looking at how the organization is as an employer and supporting our employees. The organization wants not only to achieve representation of the community we serve, but also in how we serve, and services provided.

The Board discussed the endorsement of the CULC statement, and stressed that the Board does not want to only adopt a statement, but wants to use the statement as a confirmation of the Library's stance and engage in further discussions, looking to make changes in an intentional way.

The Board agreed with this sentiment, and this discussion will continue at the next meeting of the Board.

4.0 Business Arising

4.1 Covid-19 Update and Reopening Update

Åsa Kachan spoke to the CEO Report that was included in the meeting package. The Library will be making disposable masks available to the public, free of charge as the cost of mask can be a barrier for people. The Library has chosen to be proactive in this regard, as it prepares the Library in the event masks are made mandatory.

Åsa Kachan reported that our teams working incredibly hard readying the branches for re-opening. By July 7, all branches will be re-opened. There will be a phased approach to branch openings, as there are some locations that are more difficult to prepare for than others; during the next few days, branches will begin to re-open as they become ready.

The Board discussed popular concerns that have been brought forward, such as how to deal with individuals who refuse to follow social distancing guidelines. Management responded that there has been an effort to ready staff to return to branches; there have been a number of training sessions and opportunities for staff to ask questions. As these

are unprecedented times, it is not known how the public will return to the Library space, but it is expected numbers will be down considerably. Other re-opening discussion highlights included:

- Lots of content is available on the website for the public
- The public has not submitted many questions/concerns in advance of re-opening
- Public has provided overwhelming support for the Library when the re-opening announcement was made
- Masks, face shields, sanitizers, and appropriate cleaning products have been provided to every branch/department
- Measures have been taken to reduce close interaction in branches. Changes to fines, photocopier fees, checkout stations have been implemented.
- Computer stations have been moved to ensure social distancing between stations can be achieved. Time on the computers has been adjusted.
- Materials are held on return for 24 hours.
- Meeting rooms are not available for renting at the moment – this may change.

4.2 Facility Layout

Terry Gallagher provided an overview to the Board regarding the current facility layout of our branches and the challenges at some locations with respect to the Library's COVID-19 response. He also provided the Board with presentation of the architectural drawing related to the Dartmouth North renovations.

While considering how present branch layouts need to be adjusted in response to the pandemic, Terry Gallagher reported that he, along with others, have been busy examining how the facility layouts of various branches of Halifax Public Libraries will need to be adjusted moving forward. Adjustments to layouts of Halifax North, Cole Harbour, Captain William Spry, Sackville, Bedford, and Alderney Gate were discussed.

Dartmouth North renovations will begin in the coming months, and Halifax North renovations and a new Bedford Library remain major capital projects for the coming years. To date no site has been selected for the Bedford Library.

The East Preston Community Office will be undergoing some minor renovations to the space. The refit is currently 75% complete, with paint colours and furniture choices being the next steps for completing the approximately 500 square feet space. Board Chair Cindy O'Driscoll thanked Terry Gallagher for the facility overview.

4.3 2020 Board Dates

Board Chair Cindy O’Driscoll spoke to the Board regarding hold a meeting of the Board in August at Halifax North Memorial Library. The Board will see the site, and then have an important generative discussion on matters of social and racial equity.

Marika Warren put forth the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board hold an education session/tour and regular Board meeting at Halifax North Memorial Public Library in August of 2020, although the timing may be adjusted due to covid-19.

This motion was seconded by Lisa Blackburn.

Motion approved.

Alison Lucio will poll the Board to find an appropriate date.

5.0 Board Committee Reports (Standing Items)

In advance of the Committee Reports, Board Chair Cindy O’Driscoll encouraged Emily Miller and Heather Rose to decide which Committee they want to become members.

5.1 Board Planning & Performance Committee

The Committee did not meet, and therefore no report was provided.

5.2 Finance & Audit Committee

A report from the Committee was included in the meeting package.

5.2.1 Financial Update

Committee Chair Marika Warren reported that there were no concerns regarding the financial forecast report that was included in the meeting package. No concerns were expressed by the Board regarding the financials.

Marika Warren shared that the audit has been completed. There will be a meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee scheduled, and review and board decision will come to the full board at the August meeting. This timing will work with a September Annual Meeting. Marika Warren thanked the staff for working tirelessly through the audit.

5.2.2 Risk Registry

Committee Chair Marika Warren spoke to the Draft Risk Registry and Risk heatmap that was included in the package for review. This method of monitoring risk is fairly consistent across the public sector. The Board was encouraged to review the draft framework and provide feedback to either Marika Warren, or

Library Management. After any feedback is incorporated, the Risk Framework will be brought back to the full board for decision.

5.2.3 Eliminations of Fines

Committee Chair Marika Warren spoke to the memo of June 17, 2020 from the Finance & Audit Committee that was included in the meeting package.

Marika Warren put forth the following motion:

THAT realizing the role of Halifax Public Libraries is to provide free and equitable access to all, and realizing that fines undermine this role and create barriers to library use, Halifax Public Libraries collect no fines for overdue materials going forward. Existing fines and fees will be eliminated. Halifax Public Libraries will continue to charge for lost materials after multiple notifications of overdue materials.

This motion was seconded by Emily Miller.

Motion approved.

Although many members of the Board were eager to share the exciting news, everyone was asked to keep this decision confidential as the organization will publicly announce this change.

5.3 LBANS Update

No update was provided as the LBANS Board has not met.

6.0 Motion to Move In-Camera

Heather Rose put forth a motion to move in-camera for the purposes to discuss:

- 6.1 SWP Update**
- 6.2 CEO Succession Plan**
- 6.3 CEO Evaluation**

This motion was seconded by Tim Outhit.

Motion approved.

7.0 Adjournment

Board Chair Cindy O'Driscoll called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. .

Meeting adjourned.